

NSC BRIEFING

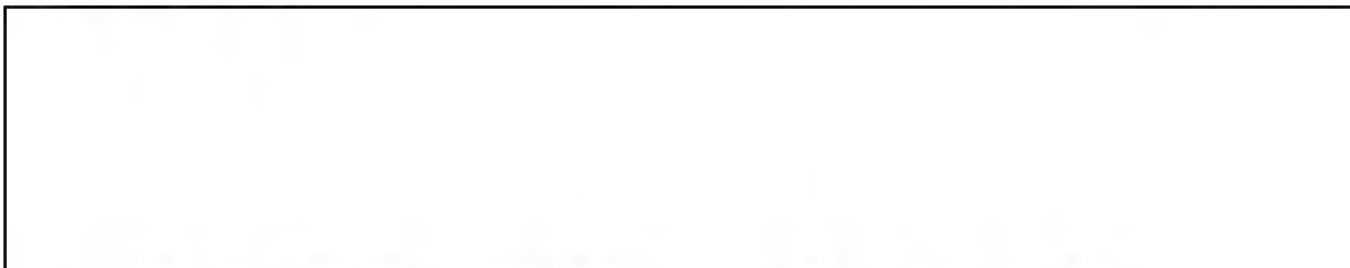
22 December 1958

USSR

- I. Khrushchev has apparently found it necessary to mount a full-scale attack on his "anti-party" opponents (Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and Shepilov) ousted last year for plotting against him.
 - A. He attacked group at last week's central committee meeting in strongest terms since initial reaction last year following exposure of the plot. Other speakers at the meeting followed suit.
 1. Khrushchev called group "despicable" and accused it of opposing nearly every major agricultural policy sponsored by him since Stalin died. He even charged Malenkov with dishonest juggling of figures during the Stalin era.
 2. Khrushchev said "The tongue refuses to call such people 'comrades,' even though they have remained members of the party." This could mean that they will be expelled from the party. However, no further action against them was apparently taken at the meeting.
 - B. Former Premier Bulganin was forced to join in the attack by confessing to the central committee his complicity in the plot.
 1. Although we had long suspected that Bulganin was involved, his name was officially linked with the "anti-party group" for the first time ⁱⁿ a Khrushchev speech on 12 November.
 2. Bulganin "turned state evidence" and verified Khrushchev's charges against himself and his colleagues.

3. In doing so, he gave a strong testimonial to the "genius-like" wisdom of Khrushchev's policies.

II. Timing of the CC meeting (on eve of special 21st party congress and inauguration of new seven-year plan) and unusual publicity gives it suggest its real purpose was to emphasize Khrushchev's control over Soviet party and state and intimidate anyone tempted to question his policies.



B. The meeting was, unprecedentedly, fully reported while still in session, obviously in order to make certain that lessons of "anti-party group" clear to all citizens.

1. Proceedings very similar to Supreme Soviet session--no real discussion; speeches by party bigwigs interspersed with the inevitable milk-maids and tractor drivers.
2. "Staging" meeting this way has by-product of downgrading central committee from its decisive role in June 1957 to rubber stamp level of Supreme Soviet. Obvious to all citizens that body whose meetings prearranged does not make decisions.

III. Intensified attack on "anti-party" plotters and staging of new testimonials to Khrushchev's leadership may indicate he feels need for more unquestioning support as he launches admittedly seven-year plan. (He told meeting its agricultural ^{goals} were complex and difficult.)

- A. Khrushchev is probably not facing actual opposition at this time. Present evidence indicates he is firmly in control.
- B. However, his policies have undoubtedly antagonized a number of highly placed individuals and he may foresee difficulty trying to carry out simultaneously all the major programs now under way in the Soviet Union.
- C. Recent attack on former opposition certain to intimidate anyone tempted to question his policies.

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